

What's New in the MPDC

NOVEMBER 25, 2002

DISTRICT BEGINS EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF NEW CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY LAW

The MPD will provide information about the new law during seat belt and child passenger safety seat checkpoints scheduled throughout the city during Thanksgiving week. The checkpoints are part of the national Operation ABC (America Buckles-up Children) Mobilization. Learn more at: www.nsc.org/airbag.htm

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the MPDC this week kicked off a campaign to educate drivers about DC's enhanced new child passenger safety law. The public education effort began with a seat belt and child passenger safety seat checkpoint on Friday, November 22, at 7th and O Streets, NW. Over the next month, Metropolitan Police officers will be issuing only warning citations to motorists who violate the new law. After the 30-day warning period, officers will aggressively enforce the law, which carries stiff new

penalties. The Child Restraint Amendment Act of 2002 requires, for the first time, that children under the age of 8 must be properly seated in an installed infant, toddler or booster child safety seat, and booster seats must be used with both a lap and shoulder belt. Previous District law required safety seats only for children under the age of 3. The new law also increases penalties for drivers who do not properly secure child passengers. For first offenders, the fine has been increased from \$55 to \$75, plus two points on the operator's license. In lieu of the fine, first-time offenders can choose to pay \$25 and attend a child restraint safety class. The class, plus the \$75 fine, are mandatory for second-time offenders. Fines increase to \$125 for a third offense and \$150 for fourth and subsequent offenses. Increased fines under the law will fund the Child Passenger Safety Program, under which at least one child passenger safety seat fitting station will be established in each of the eight wards and children of low-income families will be provided with child restraint systems for free or at a minimal cost. Read the complete news release:

For details on the laws in DC governing seat belts and child passenger safety seats, click on:

mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/cseatlaw.shtm

mpdc.dc.gov (Click on News Room)

SPEEDING CONTINUES TO DECLINE IN PHOTO RADAR ENFORCEMENT ZONES

The latest data from DC's red-light camera program show a 58 percent reduction in red-light running violations at the 39 inter-sections equipped with cameras. Details at: mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/redlight.shtm

The latest data from the MPDC's Photo Radar Speeding Reduction Program show that speeding continues to decline in those enforcement zones covered by photo radar. Average speeds on residential streets, arteries and highways all continue to be lower than they were when the program began more than a year ago. On streets with a 25-mph speed limit, for example, the average speed of all vehicles de-

tected by photo radar was 28.2 mph in October 2002, down from 35.5 mph in July 2001. In 50-mph zones, the average speed has fallen from 57.7 mph to 49.5 mph during the same period. At the same time that overall speeds have declined, the percentage of motorists speeding aggressively has also fallen. In October 2002, when a record 683,067 vehicles passed through photo radar, just 9.5 percent were found to be exceeding the program's threshold speed. By contrast, nearly 31 percent of the drivers in July 2001 and 26 percent in October 2001 were exceeding the threshold. Through October 2002, more than 408,000 photo radar tickets had been issued, with just over 275,000 paid, resulting in \$20.6 million in fines collected. For detailed information about automated speed enforcement, including the latest results, go to:

mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/speed.shtm

SOUTHEAST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INTAKE CENTER OPENS

The DC Superior Court has officially opened the first satellite Domestic Violence Intake Center – a partnership of the Superior Court, Women Empowered Against Violence, Inc. (WEAVE), the US Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia the MPDC, the Office of Corporation Counsel, DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Legal Aid Society of DC, Ramona's Way, and the Crime Victims Compensation Program. The DVIC is a "one-stop shop" consisting of various agencies working to provide coordinated legal and social services to victims of domestic violence. The satellite DVIC operates out of the Greater Southeast Community Hospital, 1328 Southern Avenue, SE, Suite 311. The Center enables domestic violence victims residing in Wards 6, 7 and 8 to take the initial step toward protecting themselves from their batterers in a location that is convenient and accessible. The Superior Court provides a domestic violence clerk to assist in court proceedings, including requests for temporary protection orders (TPO), via a Web-camera connected with a judge in the Moultrie Courthouse downtown. Additionally, the Superior Court stations a Crime Victims Compensation Program Advocate at the DVIC to explain the resources available to victims to deal with crime-related expenses. The DVIC's hours of operation are Mondays, 8:00 am–4:30 pm; and Tuesdays through Fridays, 8:30 am–4:30 pm. The DVIC's main number is (202) 561-3000; the fax is (202) 561-3093.

For more information about DC's Crime Victims Compensation Program, click on:

mpdc.dc.gov/serv/victims/victimfaq.shtm

REMINDER: HYPOTHERMIA WATCH PROGRAM IN EFFECT

With cold weather projected for the next week, DC residents are reminded about the District's Hypothermia Watch Program, which Mayor Williams announced last month. Hypothermia is a life-threatening condition that could afflict those living on the streets when the temperature falls below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, or the wind chill factor creates the same effect. DC's Hypothermia Plan calls for every government agency, every community, and all citizens to get involved and protect those at risk. The hypothermia season lasts from November 1 to March 31. Please call (800) 535-7252 if you see someone on the streets when the temperature is below 32 degrees. The MPDC is once again participating in the Hypothermia Watch Program, with officers paying special attention to people on the streets when the temperatures are cold and working with the Department of Human Services to help those in need. Learn what citizens can do to help prevent hypothermia tragedies this winter by going to the DHS Website:

dhs.dc.gov/serv/hypothermia.shtm

UPCOMING

- Project Harvest: Again this year, the MPDC is teaming up with News 4 (WRC-TV) and WHUR-96.3 FM to collect food items and cash donations for the less fortunate during this holiday season. Donation boxes are available at MPDC facilities, as well as the Metropolitan Police Boys and Girls Clubs. Donations will also be accepted outside the Old Post Office Pavilion on Tuesday, November 26.
- Thanksgiving Closures: The MPDC's administrative offices will be closed on Thursday, November 28, in honor of the Thanksgiving Day holiday, but will be open on Friday, November 29. Neighborhood patrols, the Public Safety Communications Center and other essential services will be staffed both days.

Information, ideas or comments about this service?

E-mail Kevin Morison, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at kevin.morison@dc.gov.

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MPDC.DC.GOV